

ANMC Board of Directors nominee

Lee Richardson, Office of Consumer Affairs (OCA) Director-Designate, has been elected to serve a 3-year term as a member of the American National Metric Council (ANMC) Board of Directors. ANMC is a nonprofit organization whose main purpose is to coordinate the change to metric in the private sector.

Energy information

Housing and Urban Development Dept. (HUD) has released an energy information package designed to give consumers energy saving tips and to help the public cope with the high costs of energy. The package includes pamphlets on HUD's insured loan program for weatherizing and installing solar space heating and cooling systems, weatherization hints, and information on solar heating and cooling. The information package is available by writing HUD Energy, 405 Riggs Rd., NE, Washington, DC 20011.

Justice recommends

Justice Dept. has asked the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) to eliminate over the next 5 years regulations that require interstate truckers to follow circuitous routes between points they are authorized to serve.

Justice says that allowing truckers to operate on the shortest routes would increase competition in the trucking industry and save up to 51 million gallons of fuel and \$139 million in transportation costs annually.

Presently, motor carriers are generally required to use the exact routes specified by ICC.

Thus, a carrier with an approval authorizing service from Cincinnati to Indianapolis (108 miles) and another for service from Indianapolis to Louisville (114 miles), but with no approval for direct service between Cincinnati and Louisville (113 miles), can lawfully provide Cincinnati-Louisville service only by carrying the cargo through the Indianapolis "gateway"—a route 109 miles longer than the direct route between the 2 cities.

In recent years, however, ICC has adopted a limited exception to this general rule, Justice said.

According to Justice, the total elimination of gateway requirements—which Justice recommends—could reduce truck distance traveled nationally by as much as 233 million miles a year.

Correction

CONSUMER NEWS: Dec. 1 contained an incorrect caption for one of **Office of Consumer Affairs'** (OCA) comments. The comment should have been headed "Junk phone calls" instead of "Junk mail." We apologize for the error.

consumer news

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
Office of Consumer Affairs

Vol. 8, No. 1, Jan 1, 1978

Hair dyes

A recent **General Accounting Office** (GAO) report to Congress concludes that some colors used in coal tar hair dyes—the dyes most widely used by an estimated 33 million women to permanently or temporarily change their hair color—may carry a significant risk of cancer to users.

Because exemptions to the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act do not permit **Food and Drug Administration** (FDA) to regulate coal tar hair dye products effectively, GAO recommends that Congress repeal the exemptions. If this is done, colors used in these dyes will be subject to premarket approval by FDA (similar to other color additives), and manufacturers will have to prove that these colors are safe.

It should be noted that FDA has authority to require warning labels on coal tar dye products—such as the importance of having patch tests and of avoiding eye contact—it has not used this authority to require a cancer warning on the labels.

FDA agrees with GAO's recommendation that Congress repeal the coal tar hair dye exemptions because it believes that these dyes should be subject to the same regulation and safety appraisal as other cosmetics. In fact, FDA is now evaluating a report from the **National Cancer Institute** (NCI) on the hair dye agent, 2,4-DAA, which indicates that 2,4-DAA can cause cancer in test animals. In addition, FDA recently asked NCI to expedite a final report on another hair dye agent, 2,4-TDA, as well as reports on 8 other hair dye ingredients being studied by NCI.

Copies of GAO's report to Congress are available without charge to non-profit organizations and members of the press. You may write to General Accounting Office Distribution Section, Room 4522, Washington, DC 20548. Ask for *Cancer and Coal Tar Hair Dyes: An Unregulated Hazard to Consumers*.

For additional information on hair dyes call FDA's Office of Consumer Inquiries at 301-443-3170.

Update of the "Sunshine Laws"

The ability of citizens to know how Federal decisions are made was at issue recently when the **Library of Congress** told a Senate Governmental Affairs Subcommittee that 8 months after the effective date of a law requiring "government in the sunshine," more than half of Federal agency meetings still are at least partly closed to the news media and the public. The law, requiring 47 Federal agencies to give advance notice of meetings and open them to the public—with certain exceptions—went into effect March 11.

In a Nov. 29 report the Library told the Senate Subcommittee that out of 1,003 meetings conducted during the first 6 months of the law, 527 were closed to some extent—339 completely closed and 188 partially closed.

In only 193 of the 527 closed meetings did the agency involved cite relevant exceptions in the law—such as national security, financial confidentiality or personal privacy—as the reason for excluding the public. The Library said agencies with the greatest number of closed or partially closed meetings were the **Securities and Exchange Commission** (SEC), **Nuclear Regulatory Commission** (NRC) and the **Federal Reserve System** (FRS).

Consumer News index: Vol. 7, part 2: July 1, 1977—Dec. 15, 1977

Below is an index to CONSUMER NEWS and its supplements CONSUMER REGISTER and RATE REGISTER for the issues published July 1, 1977 through Dec. 15, 1977. (RATE REGISTER was discontinued as a separate section on Sept. 1.)

Date and page of the newsletter are given after each subject. "Electric cords Nov 15:3" means an item about electric cords appeared on page 3 of the Nov. 15 issue of CONSUMER NEWS. Subjects that appeared in CONSUMER REGISTER or RATE REGISTER are designated by "CR" or "RR" before date and page number. "CR Jul 1:1" means page one of the July 1 issue of CONSUMER REGISTER; "RR Aug 15:2" means page 2 of the Aug. 15 issue of RATE REGISTER.

Recalls, warnings, publications and laws are listed only once—under main entries for "Recalls," "Warnings," "Publications" and "Laws." Also, RATE REGISTER subjects are listed only once—under RATE REGISTER.

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No bones about it

Both Esther Peterson, Special Assistant to the President for Consumer Affairs, and the **Office of Consumer Affairs** (OCA) have commented on **Agriculture Dept.**'s revised proposal to permit the use of meat food products prepared by mechanical processing of ground bone (See **CONSUMER REGISTER** Nov. 15, 1977). The new meat product is called tissue from ground bone (TGB) instead of mechanically deboned meat (MDM) as originally proposed.

Under the original proposal, the legal definition of meat would have been changed and consumers would not have readily known if processed meat products purchased used MDM which contains particles of ground bone. The new proposal would classify TGB as a meat product requiring clear labeling, and limit the amount of the TGB to 20% of the meat or poultry in a given product.

Mrs. Peterson said the new proposal "safeguards consumers' health, safety and right to know, permits industry to take advantage of new technology, and provides clear and enforceable standards for government regulation of TGB."

OCA praised Agriculture "on its effort to make this untapped protein source available to consumers," while allowing consumers to "make an informed choice among competing products."

TGB contains small amounts of calcium resulting from processing and Mrs. Peterson said that the proposed regulations require "adequate labeling of products with TGB so that persons who must restrict their intake of calcium or wish to avoid TGB for other reasons can do so."

The comments noted 2 points omitted in the proposed rules, however. First, the new rule does not require consumers to be informed that food served in restaurants and other commercial settings or institutions contains TGB. The second omission cited is a provision that would allow processors who do not use TGB to include a label statement that a product does not contain TGB. "Such statements," Mrs. Peterson said, "would be a real service to consumers who want to avoid TGB," and who may not be sufficiently aware of the fine points of Agriculture's labeling requirements to know that TGB must be listed on the label if it is present in the product.

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